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SUBJECT: RWANDA: FRANCE SENDING A DELEGATION IN OVERTURE
FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS

REF: PARIS 3147

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, 1.4 (b/d
) .

11. (C/NF) An MFA delegation will travel next week to Rwanda in an effort to improve diplomatic relations, severed since November 2006, we learned on September 5 from Helene Le Gal, MFA DAS-equivalent for East/Central Africa. She disclosed that MFA A/S-equivalent Jean de Gliniasty and Laurent Contini, senior AF advisor in Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner's cabinet, would travel to Kigali on September 11 for discreet meetings that could pave the way for a later visit by Kouchner. Le Gal acknowledged keen French interest in restoring diplomatic relations with Rwanda. FM Kouchner, shortly after taking office, publicly expressed interest in visiting Kigali, but the MFA convinced him that a lower-profile, more technically-oriented delegation would be more appropriate as an initial first step.

12. (C/NF) Le Gal hoped that the Gliniasty/Contini visit would break the ice and determine Rwanda's intentions towards normalizing relations. Le Gal said that the GOF was not going to publicize the Gliniasty/Contini visit but that she anticipated news of the visit would leak at some point. If the visit proved useful, it could serve as a springboard for an eventual visit by FM Kouchner.

13. (C/NF) Belgium continues to represent French interests in Kigali and France receives news through other intermediaries, Le Gal noted, but she implied there is no direct dialogue with Rwanda itself. It was now time for the GOF to initiate direct exchanges in order to improve relations, which has been a GOF objective since Rwanda severed relations in November 2006. Le Gal conceded that France had paid a high price for former anti-terrorism Judge Bruguiere's accusations of genocide against several leading Rwandans, including President Kagame, for various forms of alleged involvement in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, accusations contained in a report Bruguiere issued shortly before his own resignation from office in an unsuccessful attempt to win a seat in France's National Assembly.

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